

Appln. No. 09/696,095
Amdt. dated April 8, 2005
Reply to Office Action of January 12, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

The January 12, 2005 Office Action and the Examiner's comments have been carefully considered. In response, claims are cancelled and added, and remarks are set forth below in a sincere effort to place the present application in form for allowance. The amendments are supported by the application as originally filed. Therefore, no new matter is added.

DRAWINGS

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that he considers the drawings filed with the application as informal. In response, Applicant respectfully states that the drawings filed with the application are not informal, but indeed formal as indicated in Applicant's application transmittal letter. If the drawings are informal, the Examiner is respectfully requested to advise the Applicant in the next Patent Office communication as to why he considers the drawings informal.

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PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

In the Office Action Summary Sheet attached to the January 12, 2005 Office Action, only claims 46 and 48 are rejected. This appears to be a clerical error by the Examiner since within the body of the Office Action (see item 2 on page 2 thereof), claims 48-56 (all of the claims pending in the application prior to amendment) are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over USP 6,389,541 (Patterson). In response, claims 48-56 are cancelled and new claims 57-62 are added.

The present claimed invention as defined by claim 57 is directed to a printing information distribution apparatus which is adapted to be connected to information terminals and printers located at different places, through a network. The apparatus includes user information storage means for storing user information regarding an information terminal which accesses the printing information distributing apparatus, printing reservation information storage means for storing printing reservation information, and information terminal authenticating means for acquiring, when the information terminal accesses the printing information distributing apparatus through the network, identification information indicating a user of the one of the information terminals, and performs authentication to determine

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whether or not the user of the information terminal is stored in the user information storage means. The apparatus also includes printing reservation means for (i) transmitting a printing reservation screen image for use in reservation for printing desired printing information to the information terminal, when the information terminal authenticating means authenticates the information terminal, (ii) receiving a reservation for printing the desired printing information from the information terminal, and (iii) storing printing reservation information indicating the desired printing information and the identification information indicating the user of the one of the information terminals, which is acquired by the information terminal authenticating means, in the printing reservation information storage means, in association with the printing reservation information and the identification information, printer authenticating means for authenticating one of the printers, when said one of the printers accesses the printing information distributing apparatus through the network, and identification information fetching means for fetching identification information which is transmitted by said one of the printers through the network when the printer authenticating means authenticates said one of the printers and the identification information is input. The apparatus further

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includes printing information generating means for (i) retrieving from the printing reservation information storage means based on the identification information fetched by the identification information fetching means, (ii) reading printing reservation information associated with the identification information from the printing reservation information storage means, and (iii) generating printing information based on the read printing reservation information, and printing information transmitting means for transmitting, through the network, the printing information generated by the printing information generating means to said one of the printers which transmits the identification information, and causing said one of the printers to print out the printing information.

USP 6,399,541 B1 (Patterson) discloses a digital content access regulating system which transmits a digital content such as text, video and music to a personal computer of a user which has paid a charge for the content or has been authenticated (see Patterson at abstract and column 7, lines 39-47).

In contrast to the present claimed invention as defined by claim 57, the system of Patterson merely transmits digital content to the personal computer of a user based on an access request. That is, Patterson does not disclose a structure in

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which reservation for printing is made by using an information terminal, and printing information, for which reservation for printing has been made, is printed out from an arbitrary one of a number of printers located in different positions.

The present claimed invention has the following advantages. According to the invention, reservation for printing of desired printing information is made by using an information terminal provided in a user's home or a portable information terminal carried by the user. Then, even in the case where the user is not at home, the above desired printing information can be printed out from a printer located at an arbitrary place (for example, proximate the user's current location) simply by inputting identification information. Accordingly, the user does not need to provide a printer in his or her home, and desired information, for which reservation for printing has been made, can be printed out from a desired place.

Such advantages cannot be obtained by Patterson and it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Patterson to arrive at the present claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing, claim 57 is patentable over Patterson under 35 USC 102 as well as 35 USC 103.

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Claims 58 and 59 are either directly or indirectly dependent on claim 57 and are patentable over the cited reference in view of their dependence on claim 57 and because the references do not disclose, teach or suggest each of the limitations set forth in claims 58 and 59.

New claims 60-62 correspond to claims 57-59 but are written in non-means-plus-function format. Independent claim 60 is patentable over the cited references for reasons, inter alia, set forth above in connection with claim 57. Claims 61 and 62, which are either directly or indirectly dependent on claim 60, are patentable over the cited references in view of their dependence on claim 60 and because the references do not disclose, teach or suggest each of limitations set forth in claims 61 and 62.

It is respectfully believed that no additional fees are due for the presentation of claims 57-62 because the application as amended includes two (2) independent claims and six (6) total claims. However, if any additional fees are due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 06-1378 for such sum.

In view of the foregoing, new claims 57-62 are patentable over the cited reference under 35 USC 102 as well as 35 USC 103.

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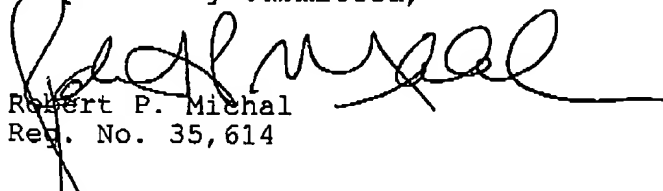
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If the Examiner disagrees with any of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to point out where there is support for a contrary view.

Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims, and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,


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